

TOPICS OF THE TIMES.

A CHOICE SELECTION OF INTERESTING ITEMS.

Comments and Criticisms Based Upon the Happenings of the Day—Historical and News Notes.

Don't fail to inspect Central America's show windows for the latest styles in revolutions.

Castagni is now a chevalier of the Order of Savoy. Is this anything that can be used as collateral?

Well, well, they are going to drive the Turk out of Europe again. This is positively worse than the Patti farewell.

The French deputies will be loath to surrender one of their most prized privileges, that of slapping an opponent's face in the chamber.

Now comes the news that the Chinese Dowager Empress has started a paper in Peking. It's hard to keep a dowager like that in her coffin.

In melancholy moments a fellow sometimes gets to wondering what people would say if he should whip the preacher who married him.

Madam Yale says that ugliness is sin. We are eating four kinds of breakfast food and wiggling our ears for physical exercise. There may be hope.

The President is said to be a poor fisherman. The strenuousness that unfits him for fishing, however, is probably what makes him a successful hunter.

"Kind words," like kind hearts, are more than coronets, but you can't buy a gallon of kerosene with them. The Rockefeller, father and son, give the country a pain.

At last accounts Mr. Rockefeller had not written a check for \$1,000,000 in payment of a bill for a new stomach. Perhaps the new stomach factories are behind with their orders.

Rubino gets a life sentence for missing the King of Belgium three times. We shudder to contemplate what might have been his deserts had he fired a few more shots in the same place.

A Montana suicide took morphine, strychnine and cocaine. He should then have jumped into a river and shot himself during the descent. There is nothing like making sure about these matters.

The segregation of the sexes at Chicago University is said to have resulted in "a frowsier lot of students." It is possible, however, that Professor Triggs has merely been making the students' hair stand on end by some new remarks.

The statement of a Russian artilleryman that yellow spectacles enable gunners to make bigger scores may lead to the discovery that the reporters for the sensational papers wear glasses of this hue; for they manage to see so many things not evident to the naked eye.

The London Lancet has issued a solemn warning against the insidious American quick lunch, which threatens to invade the British metropolis. There seems to be a fear that our quick lunch will finish what stomach the railway buffet has left the oppressed Britisher.

The late Archbishop of Canterbury lost his father when he was a boy, and supported himself from the age of 17. Talking to a company of workmen, he described the privations he had known. To be unable to afford a fire and to be cold, days and nights, was a part of his experience. Patched clothes and patched shoes were familiar acquaintances. Adverse circumstances did not conquer him. The reason is suggested by the remark, "I could plow as straight a furrow as any man in the parish." He was a hard worker until he was stricken with death. The struggling, tolling boy was father of the man.

Let us hope that Germany has advanced in liberalism and has developed a deeper longing for free institutions since Bismarck's day. It has a broader conception of individual independence and duty and a more general knowledge of our own political maxims and institutions. Its masses are learning that government was instituted for the benefit of the people, not pampered and polluted princes and war lords, and that when it falls in the objects for which it was instituted it becomes a worthless and costly incubus and its form should be changed. The principles of Thomas Jefferson are fermenting everywhere and will ultimately fill the world with republics, not with despotisms.

The Engineering News has been investigating the patented preparations that are alleged to make fuel last longer or give out more heat, and it finds that one specific, sold at eighty cents a pound, is composed chiefly of common salt, and all the ingredients cost a little more than a cent a pound. Apropos of another, which is claimed to assist combustion by supplying free oxygen to the fire, the News suggests that the best supply of oxygen is to be found in the atmosphere, and estimates that twenty-seven hundred pounds of the patented compound would have to be shoveled into the furnace with every ton of coal to take the place of a proper draft of air. One might sum up the results of the inquiry by say-

ing that good drafts will make lively fires, good fires will give out sufficient heat, and good sense is the surest fuel savor—although, to be sure, one cannot buy it for anything like eighty cents a pound.

Mississippi, the State which furnished a head for the Confederate government and was the second to join in the movement for secession, has recently built—in fact, has just completed—a new capitol. The State Secretary marked the occasion by sending to Mr. Robert T. Lincoln a letter which shows, perhaps, as plainly as anything which has ever been written, the attitude of the new South: "We of the South now realize the greatness and goodness of the character of Abraham Lincoln, and would honor his memory. Nothing that we could do would add to his fame. We can, however, show our respect and love for him. Permit me, therefore, in the name of the State, to invite you to place a portrait of President Lincoln in the new capitol of Mississippi, that it may symbolize his love for his country, his devotion to duty, and his heartfelt sympathy for the Southern people." Every such incident as this meets, as it merits, a warm response from the hearts of Northern people, and strengthens the bond of sympathy and good understanding between all parts of the country.

Sir Edward Clarke recently created a commotion in English literary circles by asserting that there has been a steady decline in the art of fiction writing since the days of Dickens. Mr. Gosse promptly rallied to the defense of the contemporary novelists, whereupon Mr. Birrell attacked Mr. Gosse—all in the columns of the *staid London Times*. Others took sides, and altogether the smoke of battle has risen high enough to become a matter of cable news. An American physician has recently written a book on dyspepsia in which he enumerates among the sure symptoms of that disease the victim's confirmed belief that no book worth reading has appeared since he was a boy. It might be well to send Sir Edward Clarke a copy of "How Can I Cure My Indigestion?" His view of literature is a case for the doctors rather than for the critics. It is hard to see how any thoughtful reader can be insensible to the fact that English and American fiction is improving and not deteriorating. The mere fact that the year 1902 produced no great novel should not obscure the fact. As Bliss Perry, the editor of *The Atlantic*, says in his illuminating "Study of Prose Fiction," novel writing is the great modern art, and the novel fills an ever increasing place in the life of the civilized nations. The mere fact that it does so is proof that it is a better reflex of life than it was even a generation ago. It can also be demonstrated that the novelists have improved in the technique of their art. Mr. Alden, the London correspondent, makes a poor defense of a valid cause when he says that readers to-day prefer Stevenson to Dickens and Meredith to Thackeray. He is wrong. No single author of our time has yet equalled Dickens, Scott or Thackeray, and it is foolish to pretend that they have. But it is equally foolish to deny that the average fiction of to-day is far superior, both in artistic construction and in human versimilitude, to the average fiction of fifty years ago.

A RIP-ROARING TIME.

Jim Cutler and His Wife En Route to the Circus.

There was a circus in Greenville, S. C., the day I rode out of town, and for several miles along the road I met people in wagons or on foot who were going in to see the show. Among those on foot were two old people—man and wife—belonging to the "cracker" class, and as I halted to give them good-day the old man inquired:

"Stranger, did you see anything of that circus in town?"

"I saw something of the procession," I replied. "It was parading the streets as I left."

"Was that an elephant in that procession?"

"I think there was. Yes, I'm sure of it."

"Was he a bustin' big feller?"

"Pretty good size. Yes."

"As big as that hill over yonder?"

"Oh, no."

"As big as that barn?"

"No. He was simply an ordinary, full-grown elephant."

"But big enough to give a feller a tussle, eh?" continued the man.

"He's all of that, but you don't think of tussling with him, do you?"

"That's jest what I do, son. Mary and me has set out fur Greenville to see the circus and hev a rip-roarin' old day of it. I'm gwine to walk right up to that yere elephant and grab him by his tusks and flop him on his back, and Mary's gwine to jump into the circus ring and do more standin' on her head and flip-floppin' around than all the flip-floppers put together. Mary, turn a cart-wheel fur the stranger."

The woman stepped back and did the trick very fairly, and as she straightened up with a smile on her face the old man proudly said:

"She kin keep it up fur half a mile, suh, and with my floppin' that elephant on his back and Mary turnin' cart-wheels around the ring, we'll wake up things and let the town of Greenville know that old Jim Cutler and his wife ar' still on hand and haven't lost any of their taste fur coon meat."

Arctic Explorations a Sport.

A German geographer complains that north pole exploration is in danger of degenerating into a sport, in which the establishment of "records" is the main thing. Would you sleep in a haunted house one night for \$500?

NOT MUCH FOR SHOW.

House Allows \$35,000 For St. Louis Exposition—Elevator Bill at Last.

Lincoln, Neb., March 31.—Measures of great interest were disposed of in the legislature Monday. The house reduced the appropriation for the St. Louis exposition from \$75,000 to \$35,000, refused to concur in the senate amendments to the general revenue bill and appointed Messrs. Douglas, Thompson and Morsman as a conference committee. Governor Mickey sent a special bill to the house for the purpose of enabling counties to collect delinquent taxes by the sale of property for taxes.

The senate has not yet appointed a conference committee to consider the revenue bill. It is probable that the joint conference will recommend that the maximum state levy remain at 7 mills as determined by the house, instead of 5 mills as called for by the senate amendment.

The senate did a big day's work in one short afternoon. It approved the Ramsey elevator bill in committee of the whole, passed a bill appropriating \$100,000 for the rebuilding of the Norfolk asylum and in committee of the whole approved an appropriation of \$100,000 for improvements at the agricultural college. Much to the surprise of every one the university authorities asked that the amount be taken from the one mill levy that goes to the university. The bill was amended accordingly. The taking of this money from the fund raised by taxation instead of from the general fund of the state will probably consume the entire fund and the governor will not recommend a decrease in the levy. It will delay the construction of buildings at the college farm one year. At the end of the two years if the one mill levy under the new revenue law proves excessive it can be reduced.

The house spent a large portion of its session yesterday in the consideration of the St. Louis exposition appropriation. The bill for this appropriation as introduced by Mr. Rouse carried a \$75,000 grant from the state. The house after declining too indefinitely postpone the measure first voted down a proposition to appropriate \$25,000 and then voted down a proposition to appropriate \$50,000. The sum of \$35,000 was then agreed to. On roll call on a proposition not to agree to this sum but to postpone the bill, 25 voted aye and 49 voted no. A number of members declined to vote who will be placed on record on the final passage of the measure.

The house declined to amend a bill providing for strict examinations of applicants for doctor's certificates. A proposition to exempt from examination those graduates from state colleges who have matriculated under the present law, was killed. The amendment was championed by Douglas of Rock county and was quite vigorously opposed by the physicians on the floor of the house.

The house appointed a conference committee on the senate amendments to the revenue bill. Speaker Mockett naming Douglas of Rock, Thompson, of Merrick and Morsman, of Douglas on his committee. The senate will appoint three members of the revenue committee for this purpose when the request is made for a conference today.

Husband is Shot Dead.

New York, March 31.—Filled with jealous anger at finding another man being entertained by his wife this afternoon, William J. Peppier, of East One-Hundred and Nineteenth street threw the visitor out into the hall, fought him from the third floor to the front door of the apartment house in which he lived, with the wife screaming and weeping at their heels, and was there shot dead by the man who he thought had wronged him.

This man was William Earl Dobson, a cashier in a stock-broker's office. He fled and the police have sent out a general alarm for him. Peppier was about twenty-six years old and a clerk. He had not been married long.

After being revived Mrs. Peppier, who had fainted, said that she and Dobson were together when her husband returned unexpectedly from work and a fight followed, resulting in Dobson being thrown out of the room and pursued down stairs by her husband. In the lower hall the men clinched again and Dobson fired one shot. After that the woman remembered nothing, for she fainted.

Dobson is said to be a married man with a wife and two children living somewhere in North Carolina.

Kentucky Miners Lay Strike.

Louisville, Ky., March 31.—The representatives of operators and miners of western Kentucky, who spent nearly all of last week in an attempt to settle the wage question for the coming year, resumed the conference today. The miners' wage scale expires at midnight tomorrow. If the joint committees fail to reach a settlement the miners say they will strike for an increase of 14 per cent, but the operators are not willing to concede this much.

KEEP ON HANGING

SENATE DECLINES TO ABOLISH THE DEATH PENALTY.

BILL FOR NORMAL PASSES

IT GOES THROUGH THE HOUSE VERY EASILY

PASS APPROPRIATION BILL

Two Big Appropriation Bills Pass the House—Second Pure Food Bill Passes the Senate.

Lincoln, Neb., April 1.—They may keep right on "hangin' men and women" in Nebraska so far as the state senate is concerned, but after all they do not hang many men and no woman was ever hanged in the state. Senator Wall's bill for the abolition of the death penalty was indefinitely postponed in the senate after a lengthy discussion. The present law permits a jury to determine whether the punishment for murder in the first degree shall be imprisonment for life or the death penalty. Governor Mickey, who declined to interfere with the execution of Neigendin, the double murderer of Pierce county, was present during most of the argument. No count was made, but a roll call would have shown twenty-two in favor of the present law and twelve in favor of abolishing the gallows.

The joint conference committee on the general revenue law agreed on the most of the senate amendments, including a limit of 5 mills for a state tax, but the report was not presented to either house.

The senate passed the second pure food bill, S. F. 85.

In the house the salary appropriation bill, carrying \$995,000, was passed, also the current expense bill, carrying \$1,800,000 for the continuance of state institutions. H. R. No. 1, for the location of a new state normal school in the western part of the state, went through with only fourteen votes against it. A bill prohibiting trap shooting was also passed by the house.

The joint revenue conference committee held a session yesterday and easily came to an agreement. The important amendments of the senate were allowed to stand. The reduction of the general levy is one of these which will go through. In only four minor places was there a change of importance. The house would have concurred in the report had it been certain that the amendments proposed by the committee were printed before the vote was taken.

One word in the section affecting franchise corporations was stricken from the bill which neither the house nor senate had taken out and this was regarded by some of the lawyers members as an original amendment. Representatives of the franchise corporations were on hand watching the procedure and assert that ground has been left for attacking this section of the bill a roll call was stopped to permit printing the amendments.

C. M. Rigg, acting for the Omaha Street Railway company, made a demand on the clerk of the house last evening that the record show that the roll call was begun and stopped to permit other business to be transacted. It is likely that the matter will be called up today for correction unless the records show the interruption at least. Mr. Rigg said he would have the correction made from the floor of the house today. Clerk Barnard made up the record to show that Mr. Barnard moved to concur in the senate amendments and that Mr. Douglas next moved to defer action pending the printing of the amendments, no reference being made to roll call.

The senate members of the conference committee are Brown, Pemberton and Anderson. Those of the house are Douglas, Thompson and Morsman.

The big appropriation bill passed in the house yesterday. H. R. 374 the salaries bill, carrying an appropriation of \$995,000 received but one negative vote. H. R. No. 446, the current expenses bill, carrying an appropriation of \$1,800,000 passed by a vote of 72 to 8. The house put in the entire day passing bills. The senate bill No. 31 by Pemberton providing for legalizing the new Cobby statutes, passed as did Senator Sheldon's bill No. 5, providing for the examination of applicants for license to practice medicine by board of physicians of their own school.

Miss Gould Cannot Attend.

St. Louis, April 1.—Illness will prevent Helen Miller Gould from attending the World's fair dedication ceremonies in St. Louis April 30. She had planned to come to St. Louis at that time and to bring a party of guests with her, but at the direction of her physician she has cancelled the arrangements for the trip, so a letter received here today announces. Miss Gould is a member of the World's fair board of lady managers.

OLD FAVORITES

Brightest and Best.
Brightest and best of the sons of the morning,
Dawn on our darkness and lend us thine aid.
Star of the east, the horizon adorning,
Guide where our Infant Redeemer is laid.

Cold on his cradle the dewdrops are shining,
Low lies his head with the beasts of the stall;
Angels adore him in slumber reclining,
Maker and Monarch and Savior of all!

Say, shall we yield him, in costly devotion,
Odors of Edom and offerings divine?
Gems of the mountain and pearls of the ocean,
Myrrh from the forest, or gold from the mine?

Vainly we offer each ample oblation;
Vainly with gifts would his favor secure;
Richer by far is the heart's adoration;
Dearer to God are the prayers of the poor.

Brightest and best of the sons of the morning,
Dawn on our darkness and lend us thine aid.
Star of the east, the horizon adorning,
Guide where our Infant Redeemer is laid.
—Reginald Heber.

Dixie's Land.
Away down South in de fields of cotton,
Cinnamon seed and sandy bottom;
Look away, look away,
Look away, look away,
Den 'way down South in de fields of cotton,

Vinegar shoes and paper stockings;
Look away, look away,
Look away, look away,
Den I wish I was in Dixie's land,
Oh—oh! Oh—oh!
In Dixie's land I'll take my stand,
And live and die in Dixie's land,
Away, away, away,
Away down South in Dixie.

Pork and cabbage in de pot,
It goes in cold and comes out hot;
Look away, look away,
Look away, look away,
Vinegar put right on red beet,
It makes them always fit to eat;
Look away, look away,
Look away, look away,
Den I wish I was in Dixie's land,
Oh—oh! Oh—oh!
In Dixie's land I'll take my stand,
And live and die in Dixie's land,
Away, away, away,
Away down South in Dixie.

WOMAN DOCTOR'S STORY.

Called Into a Tough Section in the Dead of Night.

At a meeting of women physicians in Philadelphia not long ago the after-dinner speaking took the form of personal experiences. One physician told of her first and only fright. A rough-looking man had come for her to visit a patient in one of the worst quarters of the city. It was past midnight, and the doctor told the man that he need not wait; she would go as soon as possible, meaning to call a cab. But when the doctor reached her door the man was waiting for her outside, and insisted upon escorting her.

I found it difficult to get rid of him, she said, and so walked on with him. I soon decided that it would be better not to offend my tough-looking escort by taking a cab and going alone, and I dared not ride with him; so I walked the whole way.

I found my patient in a dangerous condition, and the squalid room where she lay was occupied by ten or more other persons. I said they must go out, and all left save one burly negro, who declared that he would not go out in the cold. I insisted, however, and the other lodgers forced him to leave.

It was an hour or more before I was ready to take my departure, and then I planned to walk up to 8th street and take a car. My former escort offered to go with me, but I declined his offer and set off alone. I had not gone a block before I discovered that the big, surly negro, whom I had driven from the sick-room, was following me. I walked steadily on, but my heart beat faster than ever before in my life. I hadn't a doubt that he meant mischief.

I missed the car I meant to take, and I knew that at that hour of the night it would be a long time before another would come along; so I hurried on, hearing those pursuing footsteps just behind me. At every shadowy place I expected an attack. In fancy I felt the man's breath on my face and the grasp of his ugly hand on my shoulder. How I longed to see a policeman, but no one was in sight. So I walked on and on to my own door, and when I was within its shelter I was too overcome to stand.

The next morning I went back to see my patient, and was received like a princess. It then came out that the negro had followed me to see that I reached home in safety; and it further transpired that two men physicians had refused to go to the patient the night before because of the dangerous character of the neighborhood. A murder had been committed there the previous week.

BREAKFAST FOR ONE.

There Is No Accounting for the Wisdom of the Woodchuck.

That keen observer of nature, John Muir, tells in "Our National Parks" a pretty story of a woodchuck. In the spring of 1875 he was exploring the

peaks and glaciers about the head of the middle fork of the San Joaquin, and when passing round a frozen lake where the snow was ten feet deep, was surprised to find the fresh track of a woodchuck.

What could the animal be thinking of to come out so early while all the ground was snow-buried? The steady direction of his track showed he had a definite aim, and fortunately it was toward a mountain thirteen thousand feet high that I meant to climb. So I followed to see if I could find out what he was up to.

From the base of the mountain the track pointed straight up, and I knew by the melting snow that I was not far behind him. I lost the track on a crumbling ridge partly projecting through the snow, but soon discovered it again.

Toward the summit of the mountain, in an open spot on the south side, nearly enclosed by disintegrating pinnacles among which the sun heat reverberated, making a isolated patch of warm climate, I found a fine garden, full of rock cress, phlox, silene, draba, and a few grasses; and in this garden I overtook the wanderer, enjoying a fine fresh meal, perhaps the first of the season.

How did he know the way to this one garden spot, so high and so far off, and what told him that it was in bloom while yet the snow was ten feet deep over his den? He must have had more botanical, topographical and climatological knowledge than most mountaineers possess.

CREDULITY OF THE HINDU.

Sample of the Delusions Which He Occasionally Harbors.

Here is a remarkable instance of the credulity of the Hindu, and the wild kind of delusions which he occasionally harbors. The writer is described as a Hindu gentleman of standing and reputation, and this extract is taken from a letter written to a gentleman in England:

"We are having awfully serious news circulated in the papers here. Extracts purported to be from the Morning Leader, of London, and La Bon Guendia, of Spain, impress us that the emperor on the coronation day was dangerously ill, and was never really crowned, for the ministers caused him to be personated by a beggar of White-chapel. We are really very concerned to hear it, and we firmly believe the news to be a false creation, but wonder why the government is still inactive as regard to taking any steps to punish the author of so foul a calumny."

The gentleman who sends me the above extract gives some other quaint examples of the amusing fictions which gain currency among the natives of India, says a writer in *London Truth*. The bigger and the more preposterous the lie, he says, the more readily it is believed. When the Jubilee bridge over the Hooghly was being built, the story got about that the government required a thousand heads of natives for the foundations of the bridge, and had given orders that all natives walking over the maiden after dark were to be seized, and taken to the "Shaliban Khana"—the native name for the Masonic lodge—where their heads were to be cut off for use in this uncanny engineering operation. The natives, it is said, were afraid to walk in that direction after dark for this reason. Again, at the time of the last Indian frontier war, a fat Babu clerk disappeared from one of the government offices and could not be found. It was firmly believed, says my correspondent, by his fellow-clerks and neighbors, that he had been seized by order of the government, to be made into ointment for the benefit of the wounded soldiers. Happily, the fat Babu turned up again safe and sound; so no serious consequences resulted from this delusion. If an idea like this can be seriously accepted, as my informant says it was, by the class of natives who pass examinations and hold public appointments, nothing that may find acceptance with the "lower orders" can be wondered at.

So Sisterly.

"Did he really and truly say that he loved you?"

"Well, I should think he did. He swore it in four different languages."

"Dear me, can he swear in four languages? He talks so dreadfully in one. Well, I'm glad to know it."

"What do you mean by that?"

"Why, I was just telling Mame McGeachy that I didn't believe he had a talent of any kind. And it remained for you to discover his only one. How proud you must be."

"Of course, you only say that because you didn't catch him. But he saw through your tricks."

"He couldn't see through anything. He isn't bright enough."

"You're a minx!"

"You're a lady!"—Cleveland Plain Dealer.

Mr. Spurgeon's Compliment.

"Do you know, dear," the late Mr. Spurgeon once said to his wife, between the puffs of his cigar, "I sometimes wish I had never married you."

"Why do you wish that?" Mrs. Spurgeon asked, in alarm.

"Because, my dear," came the flattering answer, "it would be so nice to have the courting days over again."

Not that Kind of a Boy.

"Little boy, do you read these cheap and demoralizing works of fiction?"

"Me, ma'am? Assuredly not. Just now I'm reading Emerson and Spencer, ma'am. If I ever have any of those cheap stories, ma'am, I always give 'em to me little brother."—Cleveland Plain Dealer.

Pumps Blood Fast.

All the blood in a man's body passes through his heart once in every two minutes.